

4 Reasons to Roll Your Muscles

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I am frequently asked the question, “Why roll my muscles?” There are several good reasons, but here are my top four:

1. A stiff muscle is a painful muscle. The pain may be in the stiff muscle, referred to a near-by joint, in the muscle’s tendon, or just a general sense of ache and discomfort. Rolling a muscle loosens the connective tissue, improves the blood flow, flushes out lactic acid, and releases the tension of the muscle. The result is less muscular pain. And since most pain is muscular, this is a good thing!
2. A stiff muscle is a weak muscle. Rolling properly restores muscle strength. How? One way the nervous system controls muscle contraction is through stretch reflexes. Stretch reflexes control up to 60% of a muscle’s recruitment. When the muscle becomes stiff, the stretch reflexes

become inhibited, and the muscle loses much of its ability to contract. This can lead to a loss of proper joint control, poor athletic performance, and injury.

3. A stiff muscle causes other muscles to become weak. The nervous system uses stretch reflexes coming from certain muscles to activate other muscles at different joints. When a muscle stiffens, the other muscles controlled by that muscle become neurologically inhibited, resulting in weakness. For example, a stiff soleus in the calf can cause the hip extensors to lose up to 75% of their strength.
4. Learning to roll muscles properly and with the right tools empowers you, giving you control of your pain and discomfort. The knowledge of proper rolling technique creates a sense of ease and well-being. You don't need to feel dependent on your Physical Therapist, your Massage Therapist, or your Chiropractor if you know how to take care of your own body.